



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

60-B WESTON STREET, HARTFORD, CT 06120-1551

**Testimony of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities  
before  
The Appropriations Committee**

February 09, 2016

Submitted by: Craig B. Henrici  
Executive Director

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on our agency's budget.

The Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities is a relatively small agency, operating pursuant to both federal and state mandates to serve as an independent safeguard against abuse, neglect and violations of rights on behalf of Connecticut residents with disabilities and their families.

We make a number of significant contributions to the State's safety net: We investigate abuse and neglect; conduct mortality reviews; identify systems problems; and serve as a place people can turn to when they have no place else to go. People turn to us when they need information and advice about advocating for themselves or their family members, or when the stakes are high and they just can't get heard and need an ally to represent them. These are all labor-intensive activities, as reflected by the high percentage of our overall budget that goes to personal services.

The Governor has recommended a total cut to the Office of \$195,439 for the 2017 State Fiscal Year. This figure includes the 5.75% cut the Governor has proposed to all state agencies, totalling \$143,573 as well as "annualization" of a cut of \$51,866 that was contained in the deficit mitigation plan. In addition, the Governor has proposed transferring \$863,279 to the Office for employee fringe benefits to reflect the full cost of agency operations. In total, the Office receives approximately 60% of its funding from the State and 40% from federal grants.

It will be difficult for the Office, which has gone from 50 to 31 positions in recent years, to continue operations with the additional cuts proposed by the Governor. As a small state agency, our resources have not kept up with the demand for our advocacy work and abuse/neglect investigations.

The Office continues to make every effort to improve efficiencies and collaborate with other state agencies and private organizations. However, we may be at the point where further cuts will harm our clients and potentially increase the risk for abuse and neglect and civil rights discrimination.

For these reasons, the Office respectfully requests 30 minutes before the Regulation and Protection Subcommittee to explain the impact of this proposed budget.

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